



Allandale Neighbor

Oct 2010
Vol 25, Issue 5

DISTRIBUTED TO MORE THAN 3,100 HOMES BY THE ALLANDALE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

Tree Planting at Burnet and 2222

Steven Zettner

There is a newly-planted grove of trees on the campus of Lamar Middle School at the northwest corner of the Burnet and 2222 intersection, thanks to volunteer efforts of Sustainable Neighborhoods and area residents. The grove consists of 3 live oaks, 2 Mexican plums, and 6 tree yaupons that have been planted along the fence. It does not look all that impressive right now, and

probably won't next year either. Over time, however, this grove of trees will cool the intersection, shade the sidewalks that students use to get to school, buffer athletes from traffic, beautify a part of our neighborhood that many of us pass by every day, and make a statement that our community is an interested and credible stakeholder in the discussion of what happens along our commercial streets. Beyond all of that, they're trees. Most of

us appreciate living in the urban forest that is North Central Austin.

The project has been in my mind for 10 years – since the first time I drove through that intersection and saw how ugly it was. I thought, "Somebody should plant some trees there."

The man helming the project is Jody Jarrett, a licensed landscape architect and member of the Sustainable Neighbor-

Continued on page 2

Issue Highlights:

What's Selling in Allandale -	
Real Estate Trends	4
Hermine Doesn't Faze Great	
Northern Detention Pond	5
Editor's Note: Sound Off!	5
Notes from September ANA	
General Meeting	6
Note from the Incoming President ..	7
Raise a Puppy: Transportation Security	
Administration's Puppy Program....	7
This Year's Pecan Crop.....	9
Restaurant Review: El Chile Café	
y Cantina	9
McCallum Football Season Update ..	11
Yard Art in Allandale: Photos	12
Allandale Announcements	14
Sustainable Living	
* The Water Tank	15
* Grocery Shopping by Bike	16
Before it was Allandale - Part Two ..	17
Neighborhood Watch	18
Dog Talk: Safety on Walks	19
The Giving Gullett Garden	20
Gullett Good News	23

HAVE YOU RENEWED YOUR MEMBERSHIP?

The next ANA EC Meeting
is October 28, 6:30 p.m.,
Covenant Hall, Covenant
Presbyterian Church. The
meeting is open to the public.
The remaining EC meetings in
2010 are November 18 and
December 16.



October 2, 2010 Tree Planting at Lamar Middle School

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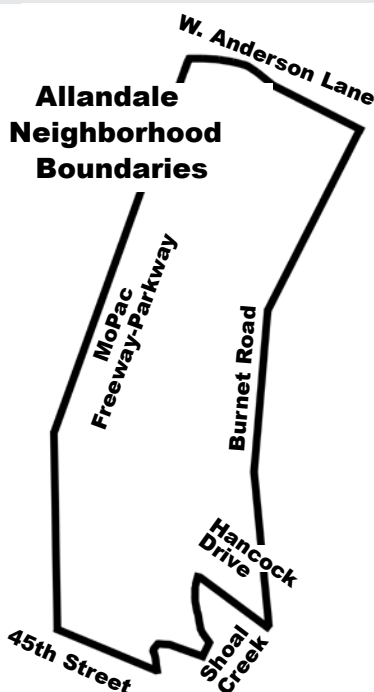
ANA General Meetings are held March and September
on the fourth Thursday.

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Tree Planting

Continued from front page

hoods steering committee. Jody has done all kinds of landscape work, from big downtown commercial projects to backyard projects in the neighborhood. Over the last three months, Jody visited the Lamar campus half a dozen times, met with school staff, investigated irrigation options, made a site drawing, worked out three alternative irrigation plans, drew up the project inventory list and ordered the supplies, and got a local nursery to donate two trees. He delivered the irrigation supplies in a trailer he borrowed from a friend in Kyle, brought part of the tree order, and supervised the tree planting. He did way more work than could ever have been expected of him. As Jody himself put it, "Hey, someday my grandson may be playing under those trees."

Jody found valuable allies along the way. Lamar Middle School's principal, Eleanor Duncan, and its athletic director, Stan Guzick, have supported the project throughout and provided time and expertise. Dennis Willenberg, Lamar's "jack of

all trades," provided detailed information on the school's existing irrigation systems and outlined a successful, if counter-intuitive, irrigation plan that is several hundred feet longer than the original plan, but easier and cheaper to install. Dennis also arranged to have a mountain of mulch delivered. Frank Vasquez, a Lamar parent and licensed irrigation technician, donated parts, obtained other parts at wholesale prices, and made crucial refinements to the irrigation plan. He also supervised the irrigation work to ensure that it is totally compliant with state and local regulations. Frank's son is on the Lamar football team, so he'll be one of the first to benefit from the project.

Most inspiring has been the outpouring of support from our community. Lamar parents and grandparents, residents of Allandale, Brentwood, Crestview, and even neighborhoods farther afield like Skyview, and Lamar students themselves have stepped up with over \$600 in donations plus volunteer hours to install and maintain the trees. For those of us, mostly in the over-40 set, who engaged in trench warfare with pickaxes and shovels, the heroine of the hour is Beth Donnelly, who arranged for a ditch witch. At the institutional level, the project received a sizable grant from the City of Austin Urban Forestry program, offers of trees from Tree Folks, and the aforementioned donated trees from wholesaler Native Texas Nursery.

The project will resonate in unexpected ways. A week after the trees went in, SN met with City of Austin sidewalks director Mike Curtis to discuss sidewalk gaps up and down Burnet Rd. Serendipitously, Mr. Curtis proposed to meet in the HEB parking lot, in full view of the freshly-planted tree grove testifying to our community's

engagement. Public resources have never been scarcer. Yet, I'm convinced that we have a strong case to make for adding sidewalks near Lamar and making it a safer and more convenient crossing not only for students, but for us all. ❖

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What's Selling in Allandale - Real Estate Trends

Tom Linehan

Driving around the neighborhood these days it appears there are an unusual number of houses up for sale. I was wondering if this is indeed the case. Are there more homes for sale in Allandale today than two or three years ago before the economy went bad? What about home values in the area? Are they holding up? We know it's a tough real estate market nationwide, but what is happening with real estate in our neighborhood?

I turned to some local realtors to get the story. Terry Echols, realtor with Keller Williams Realty, says, "there are currently 26 listings on the market in the Gullett portion of Allandale. Of those, 6 are under contract. This is a higher number of listings on the market than, say, 6 or 7 years ago, when folks planned to stay in their homes a long time. That mentality is changing."

Terry added: "What you'll see is that Allandale experienced a market slowdown beginning in 2007, based on price [going down] and Days on Market [going up]. Another factor affecting the median price is that, for a while, buyers were looking for smaller properties. But in early 2010, all these trends began to reverse, not sharply, but slowly."

Lee Albright, a realtor with Coldwell Banker, sums up as follows: "Home sales in Allandale have slowed, although not drastically. You are seeing homes take longer to sell and sellers often having to reduce their price along the way. This said, well-priced Allandale homes in good condition are still selling well. With historically low interest rates (around 4.25 % for a 30 yr fixed rate loan) I would expect home sales to stay steady in the near future."

Realtor Sibyl Dyke with Avenue One Properties agrees. "Things have slowed a bit since school started and the demand fostered by the federal government's tax credit program ended; however, Allandale is still quite active. Of the homes that are on the market now, the average number of days they have been active is approximately 90. This is a shorter amount of

Year Sold	Average Price	Average Sq Ft	Average Price per Sq Ft	Average Days on Market	Total Sold
2010	\$285,594	1731	\$171.70	62	56
2009	\$296,587	1731	\$174.67	48	61
2008	\$307,631	1755	\$177.27	53	73
2007	\$314,325	1769	\$181.43	27	56
2006	\$260,573	1697	\$158.65	24	87
2005	\$242,381	1740	\$142.40	35	82

Allandale Neighborhood Real Estate History

time than the overall Austin market and is considered to be fairly short in terms of national averages. If an Allandale property is in good condition and is priced right, it will likely sell very quickly. Those that have fallen into this category have sold in around 7 to 14 days."

With regard to prices, Sibyl said, "Prices in the area have remained stable, and although fewer homes have sold this year to date, the price per square foot has increased slightly. This holds true for many areas 'inside the loop' although other areas and some 'high end' homes have not fared as well."

Ruth Vela, realtor with Avenue One Properties, provided me with 5 years of statistics for the area and offered this analysis. "Looking closely at the numbers of sales in Allandale during the same time periods for the last 5 years, it is interesting to note that our prices have not dropped drastically. Between the years 2008 to 2009 the sales price drop was a little over \$11,000. This year compared to last year it's right under \$11,000. The days on the market has increased by about 14 days on average, and the average price has dropped slightly by just under \$3.00 per square foot.

"Working in real estate these days is challenging and interesting, and the media seems to have done Austin an injustice. Looking at our Allandale neighborhood alone, you can see that we don't quite fit the norm. Yes, there



seems to be a high inventory of homes for sale, but the days on the market and the average prices have not dramatically changed in comparison to other major metro areas in the nation.

"Allandale will always be considered central, and as things get tighter in demand and our highways are more congested we might expect more people to move into town instead of hassling with traffic. I think the demand and prices in Allandale are probably one of the steadiest in town. It is a great neighborhood due to its location and amenities that are close by. As the graph shows, it has been quietly keeping pace without too many drastic swings in either direction." ❖



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Hermine Doesn't Faze Great Northern Detention Pond

Stephanie Lott, City of Austin, Watershed Protection Department

When Tropical Storm Hermine inundated Austin earlier this month, the Great Northern Detention Pond held its own. Over a 36-hour period, the area upstream of the detention pond received about 9 inches of rain starting at 5 a.m. Tuesday, September 7 and ending at 5 p.m. the following day. This was enough rain to fill up the detention pond about halfway but was not enough to cause water to flow over the spillway.

Although data from the gauge is not yet available online, the gauge is working and its data is available to the City of Austin's Flood Early Warning Team. From the City's Emergency Operation Center, this team kept a close eye on the information from this gauge as well as from about 120 other gauges around town during the storm. It will likely be another few weeks before the data from this gauge is available online.

In general, the Shoal Creek watershed fared much better in this storm than areas to the north. Most flooding from Shoal Creek was in the downtown area and, except in a few cases, was restricted to roadways and greenbelts. Remember to stay away from creeks and greenbelts during a storm. If you must drive, look for water over the road and turn back if you see any. Save yourself! Turn around – don't drown.

The City of Austin is not aware of any flooding in the Allandale neighborhood from Hermine. If your home or business flooded, please report it to 3-1-1. This helps the City know where projects are needed. ❖

Join ANA Today!
See membership form
on back page.

Editor's Note: Sound Off!

Tom Linehan

If you ever find an article this newsletter that riles you, don't just tear up the newsletter and throw it across the room. Go to your computer and fire off an email to allandaleneighbor@gmail.com. Even better, if you read something you think is just the result of wrong-headed thinking, send an email but also go to the web site and post a comment. Many of the articles you see in this newsletter are also online at the Allandale web site: www.allandalereporter.org. There is a commenting feature below each article. You'll see when you go to the site, you won't be the first to comment on a story. In these days of electronic communication, it is easy to submit feedback. If you want to get more involved, the newsletter committee is always looking for article suggestions as well as contributors. ❖



Letters to the Editor

We'd love for readers

to submit newsletter

ideas, stories, and

reactions to articles.

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Sunday School 9:30 a.m.	Taizé Service 7:30 p.m. (2nd Sunday each month)
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Notes from ANA's September General Membership Meeting

*extracted from a draft of the meeting minutes
provided by Mary Jean Matus*

The Allandale Neighborhood Association (ANA) General Membership meeting was held on Thursday, September 23, 2010, at Covenant Presbyterian Church. Diane Swinney gave the following Treasurer's report: \$15,362.43 deposit accounts; \$6,820.22 non-profit business; \$6,537.20 business savings; and \$2,005.01 CD (12-17 months).

Cynthia Keohane, who represents ANA on the Austin Neighborhood Council (ANC), provided a general background on the comprehensive plan. ANC is stepping up efforts to press for single-member districts (with 2 mega members) in City Council.

Neighborhood Safety Coordinator Laura DiCarlo introduced Austin Police Department District Representatives Rolando Gutierrez and Josh Metteauer, who lead a general discussion on area burglaries. These crimes are typically easy to commit but hard to solve. A common entry cited was pet doors; the officers highly recommend that homeowners not have them. Other recommendations

included "No Solicitation" signs and alarm systems. The difference between 311 (non-emergency) and 911 (emergency) calls was discussed. Also discussed were concerns as to whether municipal judges are upholding the law, specifically with regard to criminal trespass. Donna Beth noted that these judges are appointed by City Council; she encouraged members to engage the City Council with concerns. A question/answer session followed.

The next presentation was by Paul Tomasovic, Assistant Division Manager for Code Compliance. Paul oversees field operations in North and West Austin, including investigations of vacant properties, dangerous buildings, rental property maintenance, and zoning. There is an ongoing effort to standardize code across cities/states. Paul noted that unkempt properties attract crime. He discussed the investigative process: violations are pursued via verbal education/warning, written notice and certified mail with timeline of 7 to 14 days (30 days for commercial properties). Call 311 to make a report (always ask for the Service Request Number in order to follow-up). He also discussed issues relating to short-term (<30 days) property rentals and the need to reconcile City and State code; current-

ly, there is no city ordinance to address the legality of these short-term rentals.

Carol Gibbs, City of Austin's Neighborhood Advisor, gave a short presentation next. Carol's position is new (18 months). The position was created in response to public request for staffing with the sole purpose of helping neighborhood associations deal with the City, specifically with regard to development-related issues.

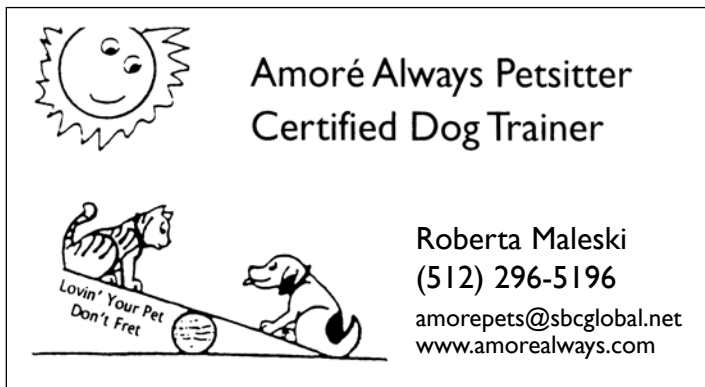
The election of new ANA Executive Committee Members, led by Diane Swinney, followed Carol's presentation. The following ANA members were elected: Cynthia Keohane was elected President. Cynthia is a current ANA EC member and Austin Neighborhood Council area representative and sector lead; her term-limit is in January 2011. Karen Knight was elected Secretary. Karen is a dentist; a 20+ year ANA resident with home on Cary Drive. Rob Robinson was elected to the Executive Committee (EC). He is a 35-year ANA resident with home on Pembroke Trail. His interests include zoning and astronomy. Sara Sternberg was also elected as an EC member. Sara is a former City of Austin staff member. She resides on Carleen Drive. ❖



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Note from the Incoming President

Cynthia Keohane

Many thanks to Mary Jean for her exemplary service on the board. MJ is a great secretary and so much more. She has played a leadership role in planning and running many special events and fundraisers, always with creative ideas and a "can-do" attitude. We hope she'll continue to be involved in ANA.

Donna Beth has set a high standard for the ANA President. She is everywhere; meeting with City Council members, working with Lamar Middle School on Safe Routes to Schools, urging the AISD Board to make Lamar Middle School a magnet school, and cutting ribbons. Whatever it takes to support the neighborhood and build the Neighborhood Association, DB is there! I am delighted that she will continue to help ANA in an off-board role.

My term as President will be only three months, due to the term limits of the bylaws. I look forward to continuing my work with the board and getting our three new members oriented. A big welcome to Karen Knight, Rob Robinson, and Sara Sternberg. ❖

*Get to know your neighbors—
organize a block party!*

Raise a Puppy: Transportation Security Administration's Puppy Program

Liz Davidson

On a Sunday afternoon in August, a black Labrador puppy in a bright orange vest trots up and down the aisles at Lowe's, curiously poking her nose in between shelves and furiously wagging her tail at everyone she sees.

Wagner, a seven-month old puppy, will one day sniff out bombs or drugs at airports around the country.

But for now, she just gets to be a puppy.

Wagner is being fostered by Mike and Lynn Davidson on Park View Drive as part of the Transportation Security Administration's Puppy Program, headquartered on Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio.

Once Wagner is about a year old, she will return to San Antonio to begin training in the National Explosives Detection Canine Team Program. For several months, she will be trained to detect different smells associated with bombs, how to search for them, and how to respond when she finds one.

Wagner will then be paired with a handler, and together they will go through another 10-week training course. If Wagner passes the course, she will be sent out to work in airports, mass transit systems,



Wagner, foster Labrador puppy in training

and cargo facilities across the nation.

The program relies on families in Austin and San Antonio to foster these puppies until they are old enough to begin training. Families receive the puppies when they are 10 to 12 weeks old and raise them until they are about a year old. TSA provides all of the food, crates, medicine, leashes, a few toys, and covers all veterinary bills.

The program's a great way to care for a puppy without any long-term commitment. "I saw a story on the evening news

Continued on page 8

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Raise a Puppy

Continued from page 7

that TSA was in need of foster families for puppies in the Austin area," said Lynn Davidson. "It looked like a cool program and we hadn't had a puppy in the house in 15 years. I thought it might be kind of fun to have one again for a little while, and do a good deed at the same time. The program gives you the experience of having a puppy around, without any of the expense."

Foster families work to socialize the puppies by taking them out and around lots of people, movement, and sounds to start getting them used to the hustle and bustle of an airport or mass transit environment.

Each puppy in the program is named in remembrance of victims of the Sept. 11 attacks. Wagner is named after Houston native Lt. Col. Karen Wagner of the U.S. Army, who was killed in the attack on the Pentagon.

The Puppy Program, also known as the

Canine Breeding and Development Center, began in 1999 with eight dogs, and has grown to include more than 500 canine teams that work around the country.

If you'd like to consider becoming a foster family, or for more information on the program, please visit the TSA's website at www.tsa.dhs.gov/lawenforcement/programs/puppy_program.shtm. ❖



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This Year's Pecan Crop

Walter Brewer



For months now, Allandale residents have watched the neighborhood's pecan trees grow thick with nutty potential. It remains to be seen whether or not 2010 will be the first time in several years the trees have yielded a bumper crop, but hopes are high among pecan enthusiasts.

Judging from this year's early summer rainfall and the number of big green nuts on area trees, this year has potential for Allandale's pecan crop. However, a hot, dry August may have affected the quality of the nuts.

Travis County's AgriLife Extension Service agents were unable to provide a local pecan prognostication for this year's crop, but directed this reporter to an article in the San Angelo Standard-Times written by a former agent.

John Begnaud, a retired Tom Green County Extension Agent is a pecan expert and said in the newspaper article that across most of Texas, this year's pecan crop looks average to above average.

"The need for water is at its highest for pecan trees through August, during the final stages of nut sizing and filling," Begnaud said in the article. "Short on water early and the nuts will be smaller than normal. Short on water later and they cannot fill and will result in wafers or shriveled kernels not worth harvesting or at least lower quality, possibly resulting in lower prices. Lower quality kernels can have lower oil content, poor flavor, darker color, lower percent kernel, etc."

Any backyard pecan grower knows that even if there was enough water for this year's crop, there are always threats from insects and squirrels.

For more information about caring for trees or planting pecan trees, visit aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/travis/leg_nuts.htm

If the area is lucky enough to get a lot of pecans, then the question becomes how to shell all those nuts.

Starting Nov. 1, the City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department Senior Activity Center offers cracking services. The center is at 2874 Shoal Crest Ave. and the phone number is 474-5921. They crack, not shell, the pecans for 25 cents a pound. Anyone who wants them to crack pecans should bring the nuts to the center in a brown paper grocery bag. The bags should weigh no more than 30 pounds each. If it's just a few pounds, they will crack them while you wait. If the crackers are busy, the pecans must be paid for then left at the center. The center will call when they're ready.

Do-it-yourselfers will find several kinds of shelling tools at stores such as Zinger and Breed & Co. Both stores have the Texan Nut Sheller, a plier-like device that enables the sheller to snip off the ends of the nut then cut it in two and reveal the meat. Both also sell the Reeds Rocket lever-style cracker. Breed & Co. offers a third style, an Inertia cracker that uses a rubber band.

The Texan Nut Sheller was recommended by a representative from Breed & Co., and this reporter also has had success with this sheller style.

Allandale pecan lovers are hoping that in the coming weeks shucks will start to open and release heavy nuts filled with thick and tasty kernels. Then, let the shelling begin. ❖

Restaurant Review: El Chile Café y Cantina

Laura Dooley



Chile Cafe y Cantina on 3435 Greystone

In the vicinity of Allandale, we have lots of restaurants that are fun to visit with kids. We take advantage of these opportunities to eat out as a family fairly regularly. But sometimes I leave those places thinking, "I wonder what it'd be like to eat here without having cups with lids or crayons rolling around on the table?"

My husband Nathan and I had such an opportunity for a quick adult dinner recently at El Chile Café y Cantina (3435 Greystone). It's a short drive over MoPac or a leisurely walk or bike ride across the Far West bridge.

We arrived at 5:10 and had to leave by 5:50 in order to be back at Gullett by 6:00 for back-to-school night. We knew we were taking a chance on being late, but the lure of margaritas was worth the risk of being tardy.

We chose to sit inside since the late-summer heat was still oppressive, though the restaurant's outdoor patio looked inviting. There were only two other tables occupied, but over the course of our 40-minute dining experience, the restau-

Continued on page 10

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El Chile Café y Cantina

Continued from page 9

rant filled up quickly.

We took advantage of El Chile's happy hour menu, which includes \$1 off drinks and half-price appetizers. I chose the Prickly Pear margarita (\$7.50/\$1 off at happy hour), which was juicy, slightly sweet, and delicious. Nathan chose a Top Shelf margarita (\$8.50/\$1 off at happy hour) and enjoyed it, too.

Chips and salsa were brought to our table; the chips were crispy and the salsa warmed up just slightly. It's a very dark salsa, almost the color of bean dip, with a smoky and rich flavor.

We explained our "time-crunch" situation to our server, and he was very attentive. Ever the deal-seekers, we ordered off the appetizer menu. We started with the Ceviche de la Casa (\$8.95 regular price/half price at happy hour), which contains fresh tilapia marinated in lime juice, along with tomato, red onion, and cilantro. It was served with crispy tostadas. The ceviche was cold, tart, and fresh,

with a nice bite to it.

We followed that up with a full order of Nachos de Camarón (\$10.95 regular price/half price at happy hour), which consists of grilled shrimp on cheese nachos, topped with jalapeños, and served with guacamole and pico de gallo. The jalapeños were a bit much for me, but Nathan enjoyed them. I was a bit skeptical at first, being a bean-and-cheese nacho type of person, but I was pleasantly surprised.

While we were eating, the general manager came over to say hello. His name is Todd Youssefi, and he has been with El Chile since the Far West location opened. He clearly takes a lot of pride in his restaurant and the fact that it's becoming a popular dining destination on the Far West scene.

He said he has a lot of regulars, folks who dine there two or three times a week. "We have a very family-friendly atmosphere."

While I did enjoy my appetizer-dinner,



Margaritas with chips and salsa

he told me that the most popular items on the menu are the Enchiladas de Camarón (\$12.95) and the Pescado Entortillado (\$12.95).

For me, however, the gold standard for any Mexican restaurant is mole sauce. There are dozens of different ways to make mole, and I'm a fan of many of them. I have, however, met a few that I haven't liked. Our server was quick to accommodate my request for a sample of the El Chile mole, and I was far from disappointed. In fact, it's one of the best

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moles I've ever tasted, and I look forward to a return visit to try the Enchiladas de Mole Rojo (\$11.95). I detected a hint of cloves, and Nathan picked up on a plum flavor. In any case, the mole was a little sweet, a little spicy, and totally delicious.

El Chile has been in this current location for two and a half years, and you can find other locations to our east (Manor Road) and south (Barton Springs Road).

Although I enjoyed my adult time, El Chile is also a great place to bring kids. Now that the weather is cooler, I see a bike ride across the Far West bridge in my future, with kids and crayons in tow.

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McCallum Football Season Update

Erik Brewer

It's early in the season, but the McCallum Knights football team is off to a shaky, but exciting, start. In the first game, the Knights fell to the Trojans in the Taco Shack Bowl between the two North Austin rivals. Anderson won 48-34.

The following week, after an hour rain delay due to lightning, the Knights used their offensive strengths to pull out a win. They beat district 5A Akins 60-43.

Optimism resurfaced as the Knights began play against district 4A teams. On their first Friday night football game, the Knights traveled to Hutto to play the undefeated Hutto Hippos. The Knights helped the Hippos get out to a 21-0 lead with several first half turnovers. However, the Knights were poised for a comeback, going to the half only down by 14. The second half was back and forth until a late incompletion in the end zone ended the Knights' hopes. Hutto won 55-42.

The weeks following did not get any better as the Knights lost to Vista Ridge 31-6.

Hopes were high as the Knights entered district season poised to win yet another district title. They opened up play against cross-town rival Travis in the Battle for the Bell. The Knights were on a 13 game winning streak in the rivalry, and poised to win the bell again. After McCallum lead the game until a little more than a minute was left, Travis made a comeback with a touchdown pass and won the game 36-33.

Even after the loss of the bell, the hopes for the district championship remain high as the Knights have ripped off two consecutive victories. In the Homecoming Game against the East Side Memorial Panthers, the Knights dominated from the start, winning 55-6. They followed up the win with another victory, beating the Crocket Cougars 27-14. The Knights take a week off in preparation of the game against rival LBJ on Oct. 21. If the Knights knock off the Jaguars, it will lock up at least a share of the district championship barring a loss against Reagan or Lanier.

Erik Brewer lives in Allandale and is Junior at McCallum. He is on the varsity football team and also covers sports for the school's newspaper. ❖

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Yard Art in Allandale

Tom Linehan

Some people go beyond grass, plants, and trees to decorate their yards. Here are photos of yard art around Allandale. They include a land shark created by owner/artist Dustin Little at the corner of Shoal Creek and McElroy. Along Great Northern just north of Gullett you will see the Easter Island sculpture created by resident and sculptor Herb Long. Lauren Levy got creative with blue bottles and made a bottle tree outside her home at the corner of Cavalier and Cary. A tree branch hanging from a tree – what's unusual about that? You will find one of Hank Waddell's pieces hanging at the Radovich house just off of Shoal Creek south of Northland. ❖

*Bottle tree at corner of
Cary and Cavalier*



Dustin Little seriously close to the shark in his front yard at the corner of Shoal Creek and McElroy



Herb Long next to his Easter Island Sculpture on Great Norther and Borden



Hank Waddell sculpture at the Radovich house on Shoal Creek just south of Northland

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Allandale Announcements:



Allandale resident Jennifer Hritz publishes award-winning novel

I, Too, Have Suffered in the Garden introduces you to Adam and Joel, an Austin couple in danger. Adam is chased by rabid ghosts: his former partner's death from AIDS, his dad's cancer, his brutal job, his own lies. Joel watches from his art studio, desperately strategizing salva-

tion. The story unfurls, tripping between destruction and forgiveness, driven by the suspense of desire and memory.

I, Too, Have Suffered in the Garden belongs to a trinity of novels starring a magnetic crew who also populate an online territory. This online universe is created by Hritz with Jennifer Elsnor and David Shields of the East Austin design studio Viewers Like You. There you'll find photographs of cigarettes and oil paints, and vignettes of mean games and first kisses, that are secret pages in the bigger story. Visit this growing and addicting world at: www.jenniferhritz.com.

TEEA Annual Bazaar

Mark your calendar for Saturday, Nov. 20. This is the date that the Travis Extension Education Assoc. will be having their annual bazaar starting at 8:00 a.m. and ending at 1:00 p.m. It will be held at Faith Lutheran Church, which is located at 6600 Woodrow Ave. between Anderson Lane and Koenig Lane. We will have a large variety of crafts for your Christmas giving, decorations for your home,

and lots of delicious baked goods, snacks, and candies. Come early to enjoy the breakfast tacos, do your shopping, and stay for a delicious lunch of sandwiches, soups, and desserts. You will probably meet some of your neighbors because we have a lot of return customers who live in the area and like what we have to sell, so they come back every year. Hope to see you on Nov. 20.

Haunted Slough - Halloween Night

Marianne Sexton and I host the Haunted Slough of Shoaledge Court, in which we showcase Marianne's magnificent artistic talent. We now have hundreds of visitors to tour the slough (which is in my yard). We have witches' brew, dangling apples, and black light in the carport for the younger goblins that may get spooked by the more scary ghouls in the slough. We offer this as a gift to the community and hope all can come.

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Free Children's Theater! Violet Crown Community Theater presents its third production *The Amazing, Unforgettable, Mixed-up Adventures of Hansel and Gretel*. This family-friendly production is free, fun, and interactive. Please bring blankets, food, and drink and watch actors from

the neighborhood amaze and entertain.

November 7, 4 p.m., Brentwood Elementary Outdoor Amphitheater (performance will be held in the gym in the event of rain).

Please bring a canned good donation!

For more information, contact Nancy Mohn Barnard at 512.914.2917 or violetcrownct@gmail.com. <http://violetcrownct.blogspot.com>

If you have an announcement you would like to share, please forward it along to the Allandale Neighbor: allandaleneighbor@gmail.com. We are looking for news on Allandale births, deaths, and celebrations (marriages, awards, distinctions, etc.) that have occurred since the previous newsletter. Also, if you just moved into the neighborhood, please send along an introduction. ❖

Sustainable Living in Allandale

Are you modifying your daily habits to reduce your carbon footprint? Do you find yourself rethinking how you get around, considering resources spent and the source of the food you eat, or changing habits that lower your energy consumption? This column is designed for neighbors to share their sustainable living practices. What follows are two articles from neighbors doing that very thing. The first, by Jim Roberts-Miller, is about their 1,480 gallon rain tank. The second article is from Steven Zettner about his weekly trip to the store by bike. He's having fun doing it. Submit your story: allandaleneighbor@gmail.com.

The Water Tank

Jim Roberts-Miller

Even before it was fully installed, we had people stopping by our house to ask about our rainwater tank. It's rather striking and surprisingly attractive for such a utilitarian object. About 6 1/2 feet high, and made of galvanized metal, it holds 1,480 gallons of water runoff gathered from approximately one-third of our roof area. We're pleased to tell some of our story in the newsletter.

Trish turned fifty in the summer of 2009, and instead of jewelry or fancy clothes decided she wanted a rainwater tank. We chose the largest size that would fit under the eaves of the house, 1) because we could afford it, and 2) because we wanted to store as much water as we could, assuming it ever rained again. Our rain barrels (we had three) did not last through that hot dry summer, even just for watering our potted plants.

We also included an electrical pump to ensure good pressure and flow rates even at low water levels.

The first thing that one has to recognize when looking at these rainwater storage systems is that you aren't likely to get your money back, except in the very long term. Don't look at this as a way of saving money. Look at it as a way of saving water, and a way to help keep your vegetable and rose gardens going if we have another drought and go back on water rationing. And note that rainwater is better for plants than chlorinated city water (which we should save for drinking and bathing) anyway! There are city rebates, but they are not as generous as the ones related to electricity.

We haven't timed things, but a substantial rain—say 1 inch per hour—will fill our tank up in a little over an hour. Similarly, it will empty out a lot faster than you might think. It's not the sort of thing that will preserve your entire lawn through a drought. We use ours to water our flower and vegetable beds and to fill our water features.

Our system is really quite simple, and fairly typical of how most residential systems operate (ours is just bigger than most). Once the placement of the tank is selected, one or more downspouts from the gutter system are replaced with PVC



Roberts-Miller water tank at corner of Silverleaf and Shoal Creek

pipe, which is run underground and then up into the tank. Depending on the location and size/type of tank, sometimes the pipe can be run down directly into the tank, or run at a slight angle from the spout along the outer wall.

The cost was \$6,100, fully installed. That included the tank, the electrical pump and extra wiring, plus all the piping and connections to our existing gutters. The job was done by the good folks over at Innovative Water Solutions (<http://www.watercache.com>).

We have been very happy with the tank, and would encourage anyone who can to try one for themselves.

Continued on page 16

Sustainable Living in Allandale

Continued from page 15

Grocery Shopping by Bike

Steven Zettner

Last fall, when my wife Sara was pregnant, she put me in charge of buying the weekly groceries. Since we already had a bicycle trailer for our kids, I decided to try making the grocery run to HEB using the cart. Sara has since recovered from pregnancy, but I insisted on keeping this family chore. It's just too darned enjoyable.

The key to success was having the right equipment. I've never been a power biker – I can never seem to work out the intricacies of a derailleur. I always get surprised by something and come to a complete stop in high gear, then break my legs trying to get the bicycle moving again. I also find those multi-lever things hopelessly confusing and end up using only two or three gears.

Three years ago, shortly after reaching my 40th birthday, I decided to buy a "European" commuter bike with an

internal hub gear system. It completely transformed my experience. The gear system is simple, and you can shift to any gear from a complete stop. The bike seems particularly well suited to hauling stuff, like a bike trailer. In a low gear I can move a lot of weight, especially on the relatively flat grades we have here in Allandale.

The bike trailer cost about \$130. You install a connector to your bike, and then the cart can be hooked up at will with just a metal pin. The trailer holds a surprising amount of stuff – not much less than what you can fill up in a grocery cart.

For summer shopping, a cooler bag is essential if you don't want deflated spinach. Also, reaching the HEB can be a little tricky. I tend to go very slowly through the obstacle course of street signs and poles embedded in the sidewalk on the HEB side of 2222 near Burnet. Their



Steven Zettner biking groceries home from HEB

new parking lot landscaping improvements have actually made it harder to reach the store on a bike. HEB's unit manager, Salman Manzur, is looking into the issue.

Otherwise, getting the groceries on a bike takes me no longer than it would in a car. I always park in the same place, right by the store entrance. When I get home, I can pull the cart right up to the door of our house and unload the groceries quickly. If you're looking for some pleasant exercise, this is a simple thing to work into your routine. ❖

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Before it Was Allandale – Part Two

Bruce Reilly and Doug Davis

Allandale was originally part of the 1841 George Washington (GW) Davis grant of land (4,405 acres) from Texas President Maribeau Lamar. This land was primarily used for farming and grazing. Shoal Creek, the name originally recorded as Cascade Creek, was a source of water for farming. As the Davis family grew, GW gave parcels of the land to his sons for starting their families. One of GW's sons, Blackstone Davis, married Elvira Tennessee Manor, daughter of James Manor (who built the first log cabin in Manor, TX.).

In January, 1862, Blackstone enlisted in the Confederate Army, leaving Elvira and their first son alone. Elvira moved in with GW and his wife on the Davis land. When GW went on trips, Elvira would be left alone with her baby and the servants. She told stories of how she heard noises at night and was afraid. Blackstone had given Elvira a cap & ball pistol that shot a large buckshot. She would hold it but never had to use it.

After the war, Blackstone was hoeing corn one morning when he heard shooting in the direction of town. He went to the end of the corn rows, at what is now Burnet Road, and saw a horseman coming with a squad of Calvary shooting at him. Blackstone knew that anyone being shot at by Yankees must be a friend of his, so he took down the top rails off the fence and motioned the rider to turn. When he came up, Blackstone saw it was Ben Thompson, with whom he was well acquainted. Ben jumped the low place, waved at Blackstone and headed for the timber on Shoal Creek. Blackstone replaced the rails and hid in the corn patch before the Yankees came over the hill and realized they had lost Ben's trail and turned back to town.

Family lore tells that Elvira was on the Houston-to-Austin stagecoach one night, with the temperature below freezing. The driver was on top, where it was really cold, and had a bottle of whiskey. By the time he got to Onion Creek, near what is now ABIA, he was badly drunk. Elvira opened the window and told him, "when you get to the top of the hill at the ferry, let me out and I will walk". The four men in the stage got off with her and said they would walk with Elvira. The driver then popped his whip and took off. When he reached the landing, the ferry was on the other side and the stage and driver went into deep, fast water. The front two horses broke free, along with the driver holding the lines, and

Continued on page 18

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Before it was Allandale

Continued from page 17

were saved. The two wheelers (the two horses nearest the coach) drowned. All the passengers were wearing heavy winter clothes and overcoats and would have probably drowned, had they not got off the stage earlier.

Blackstone and Elvira had several children. Blackstone's first child, James Manor Davis, served as Travis County Sheriff until 1902, when he died of an "apoplectic stroke." Well liked and respected, James had one of the largest funeral processions in Austin's history, with the mourners walking from Congress Avenue to the Davis Cemetery (on Vine Street).

Another son was Walter Lee Davis, the grandfather of Douglas Davis (who currently lives in Williamson County, outside Round Rock). Walter married Annie Matilda Anderson in 1893. Annie's mother was a midwife of the area (Anderson Lane is named after this family). Mid-

wives carried an important role during birth, as there were few doctors in the area. Walter and Annie lived on the farm located on the South side of the Davis cemetery, until around WWI.

****References available upon request. ♦**

Neighborhood Watch

Laura DiCarlo

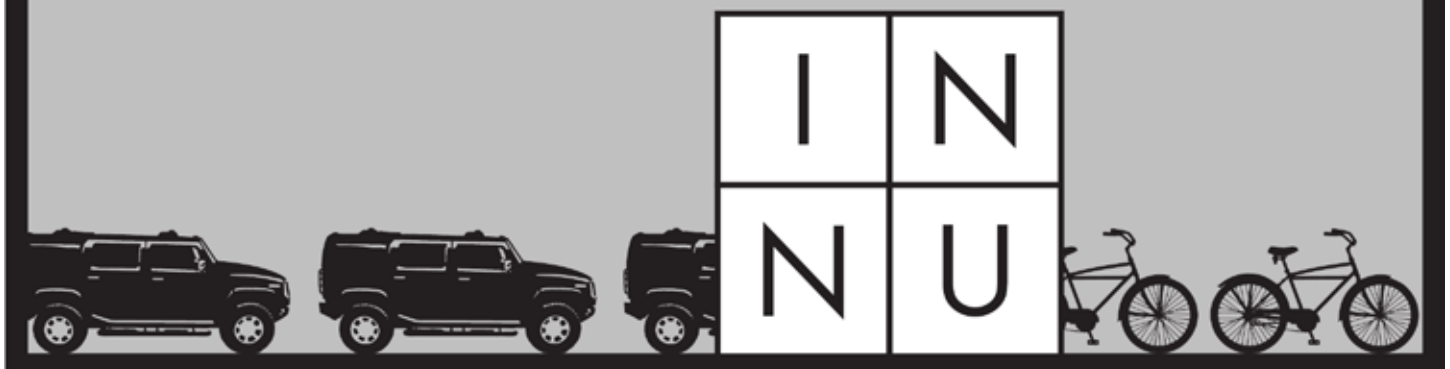
Thanks to our APD District Representative (DR) Officers Rolando Gutierrez and Josh Metteauer for coming to the 9/23 General ANA meeting. They did a great job explaining the role of a DR and fielding questions. If you have any issues and would like to reach them, Officer Metteauer serves south of 2222 – *Joshua.Metteauer@ci.austin.tx.us* or 974-8124. Officer Gutierrez's area is north of 2222, and he can be reached at 974- 5998 or *Rolando.gutierrez@ci.austin.tx.us*.

The officers made a point that crime is up citywide because of the economy, and Allandale is not experiencing any more

burglaries than are typical here. We didn't discuss this at the meeting, but since the beginning of June we have had just 11 burglaries of residences (BORs). However, 5 of them were in September! There have been 35 burglaries from vehicles (BOVs) since the beginning of June, and 16 of them were in June. It can't be said often enough – never leave valuables showing in your car, always lock your doors, and park in your driveway or carport/garage whenever possible.

The listserv was abuzz with the news recently that Sammy's House, a non-profit organization that provides services for children who are medically fragile and/or developmentally delayed, was burglarized. Sammy's house is located at 2415 Twin Oaks Dr. where Daughtery dead-ends into Twin Oaks. According to the executive director, Isabelle Huerta, someone broke a window and stole computers, including printers and monitors, sometime over the weekend before the officer workers came in Monday morning, September 20th. A total of 2 full sets of computers and parts of others were stolen, all of which had

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been donated to the facility. Residents have been making donations to help pay for installation of a security system, and according to Isabelle, Dyezz Security Systems was going to donate the equipment. Isabelle noted that Andrea Bell from the Statesman was working on getting the computers replaced. To make a donation, visit www.sammyshouse.com or call 453-5258.

The 9/19 burglary on Whiteway was big news on the listserve as well, because it occurred at night. The perpetrator was caught and arrested for possession of marijuana, among other things. Make sure all doors and windows are locked while you're sleeping.

BORs also occurred on White Horse Trail, Hunt Trail, and Shoal Creek Blvd. in September. August had 4 BORs – West Park Dr., Northcross, Bullcreek, and Montview. There is no common thread to these burglaries, except that most of them occurred during the day. The Northcross incident that involved a gun and ended with an arrest at Panda Express 8/20 was in the news (<http://www.kvue.com/news/Gun-fired-in-North-Austin-restaurant-101204189.html>). Detective David Knutsen, who investigates most of the BORs in Allandale, assured me that this was an unusual occurrence and not to be fearful of it happening again anytime soon.

At the writing of this article there have been 5 BOVs in September – 5300 block of Woodview, 4700 block of Strass, Orangewood Circle, and 5600 block of Bull Creek. The break-in on Orangewood Circle (a little cul-de-sac off of Shoal Creek just south of Foster Lane) led to a flurry of posts on the listserve about the possibility of homeless folks being involved in some of the burglaries, since the circumstances in this case (left a pack of wet cigarettes, didn't end up stealing anything, etc.) might indicate a homeless person was looking to get out of the rain we had the second week of September. We must be careful not to assign blame, yet there have been times when people who panhandle (some are homeless, some are not) have also burglarized homes and vehicles in Allandale. The best thing to do is to write our city council members and tell them of any concerns we have.

By the time you read this, National Night Out will have already occurred and so will the 10/12 Commander's Forum at

McCallum HS.

If interested in becoming a block captain or patrol, the next training will be Tuesday, October 26th at 6307 Wilbur Dr. Block captain training 7:15pm, patrols at 8:15pm. Please RSVP to Laura DiCarlo at 323-6929 or lhdiCarlo@yahoo.com.

Please contact me if you are interested in a home safety inspection or borrowing the ANA electric engraver as well. ❖

Dog Talk: Safety on Walks

Cheryl Silver

This article consists of several parts, including safety tips that have been mentioned in an earlier newsletter. I am writing in response to a request prompted by a recent event in the neighborhood where a person walking her dog was mobbed by a group of dogs who had escaped their yard. Her dog received injuries, as did she.

One of the components of safety involves reminding folks that they need to keep their dogs on leash while taking walks on public streets. Even friendly off-leash dogs can cause havoc resulting in injuries. This topic has been discussed numerous times in different venues. I will remind folks that if your dog is off-leash and injuries occur, the liability will likely be yours and could have far-reaching repercussions; including problems with your insurance or even the loss of your dog. Fortunately, Austin has a number of off-leash parks where folks with this interest can spend time with their dogs.

Another risk component is related to maintaining effective containment fencing. Remember to check that objects are not stacked next to fences such that they provide an unintended boost over the fence for your dog. Additionally, after rains it is prudent to walk your fence line and check to see if soil has eroded, creating an invitation to dig out of the yard. Boards decay and when there is a gap that a dog can see out of, a reactive dog may start chewing on the wood at that spot and eventually create an opening. Gates need to be secured with locks or carabineers.

Some people leave their dogs loose in the backyard while they are at work. They

may be unaware that their dogs are behaving in a problematic manner while home alone. Consider leaving a note for your neighbor about behavior you see while they are away in the same way you would leave a note if you saw someone behaving suspiciously around their home.

I would be very happy to come and look at your fencing and talk about containment strategies for your specific situation. I have some ideas that are very inexpensive to implement.

Finally, some tips for the neighbors on foot for keeping safe. The following is from a previous newsletter, with slight modification.

First-and most important, I recommend carrying a pop-open umbrella on walks. If you see a strange off-leash dog approaching, as the dog gets near, pop it open so as to frighten the dog and to create a bit of a barrier between you and your dog and the strange dog.

Second, purchase a hefty key chain and load it up with keys you don't need. If a strange dog approaches, hurl the key chain at the dog. I usually aim for the dog's hindquarters. It will startle the dog. Wild animals who hunt in packs will have one member who attacks the rear end, so dogs are sensitive to a rear "attack."

Wearing a hat that you can hurl at the dog may turn a dog around. Also, throw that bag with the poop you picked up at the dog.

I buy "Direct Stop" from Omaha Vaccine (<http://www.omahavaccine.com>). It is a potent spray in a pocket-sized aerosol container that disperses citronella spray – a substance dogs really don't like. It is a bit pricey, but it really is effective and it causes no harm to anyone – even your own dogs, should it blow in your direction.

Finally, I want to warn people against entrusting their children to walk dogs. Children are not strong enough to control most dogs they walk. If a leashed dog is determined to pull away, they can generally accomplish it. (A 24 lb. basenji I know of actually won a contest pulling a cart that weighed over 1,100 pounds at a pulling contest.) Also, in the event of an attack, a child could be seriously injured.

My plan is to write about vaccinations in the next newsletter. In the meantime, do not hesitate to let me know if you need some help. There is never any charge. csilver2@austin.rr.com, 512.454.7219 ❖

The Giving Gullett Garden

Stephanie Schulz

Late Allandale Resident Provides Funds to Beautify Gecko Entrance

After trying – in vain – to save an ailing magnolia tree that welcomed all who entered Gullett Elementary School, a group of Gullett parents and friends started a quest to create an equally inviting greeting for those who entered the school.

But landscaping isn't cheap, and it seemed like it would take years to find a suitable and affordable substitute for the beautiful magnolia.

Enter Betsy Sammon, the aunt to three Gullett students, and her partner, Karen Davis, who offered to fund the project with a gift from the estate of Allandale resident Helen Westbrook.

Several months of planning and many hours of work later, the garden was unveiled and dedicated at the school on September 23. The second and third grade students, much of the Gecko

administrative staff, PTA members, friends and family of Helen Westbrook – including Betsy, Karen, and various relatives, some who drove hours to get to the event – were on campus to honor Helen's memory and admire the new garden.

The green space features butterfly gardens, a pergola and outdoor seating, a revamped cart for storing gardening supplies, a snake path, a bunny run, a turtle enclosure, and a teaching area. In addition to being aesthetically pleasing, students will be quite active in the garden; a first project will involve labeling all of the plants and incorporating the gardens into their studies of the butterfly life cycle.



Gullett second grade ramp ribbon cutting

The Geckos Roll up their Sleeves

For a project like the garden to be successful, it takes a village. Laura DiCarlo, who heads Gullett's grounds team, led the effort, working to get all the things in place to make the vision a reality. The effort started with a plan. Sheryl Southwell, a second grade teacher, communicated the school's vision for the project. Stacey Roeder, Gullett parent to a kindergartner and a first grader, followed

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through with her fun project design that features a snake path. Kris Weitz Rammer helped evaluate and secure an organic landscaper. Maribeth Kozba Betton and Heather Ruggero coordinated the creation of the turtle enclosure and bunny run. Miguel Pavon and his sons in first and third grade made the turtle enclosure, and the Spytek family worked with many members of Wolf Den #8/Pack 55 to build the bunny run. And, of course, the project was backed by Gullett Principal Janie Ruiz and the PTA President Jennifer Carlson, as well as countless others with children at the school and many without, who contributed to the project with their time and donations.

"Not only are the plants and landscaping magnificent," said a Gullett parent at the dedication, "but the bunny looks to be in seventh heaven in that gorgeous coop."

"I am so incredibly impressed with how beautiful and meaningful the garden is," she continued, "and what a fabulous way it showcases how special Gullett is."

Gullett Gift is Perfect Memorial to Helen

"If gardens are a form of autobiography, Helen's told her story. No one had a greener thumb than she," said Becky Cunningham, who, with her family, lived right behind Helen for many years.

Helen spent hours in her yard. In fact, said Becky, the only time you could find

her inside was during the tennis season. "Andy Roddick was the one thing that would keep her in the house!"

Becky concluded, "This is a perfect tribute to Helen to be remembered as 'Queen of the Butterfly Garden.'"

And what a perfect gift for Gullett, helping the students and faculty truly embody the "Living Experience." ❖

Food Drive

What: Allandale Food Drive hosted by North Village Church

When: Saturday November 20th, 12-3pm

Where: Lucy Read Pre-K 2608 RichCreek Austin, TX 78757

North Village Church will be collecting donations for the Capital Area Food Bank and we need your help! Last year we were able to donate 678 lbs. of food and this year we are hoping to reach 800! You can make a difference and it is easy to help. Drop off your donation at Lucy Read Pre-K on Saturday, November 20th between 12 and 3 p.m. Visit www.allandale-fooddrive.com for more details.



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Gullett Good News

Stephanie Schulz

Geckos are Exemplary (in Many Ways!)

Another school year is underway, and the Geckos are off to quick start. Shortly after the students came back to campus, the Geckos learned that they were again an exemplary school based on their TAKS (Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills) scores. The students have hit that mark four of the last five years.

This year, Gullett will have more students than ever taking the test. Enrollment is up; there are 547 Geckos on campus this year.

Most of the students spent the first couple weeks of school looking longingly at the new playscape on the playground. Behind a fence until it could be safety tested, the new equipment was unveiled in mid-September to the joy of many students. The playground has seen a lot of action after hours as well, as the kids can't seem to get enough during recess.

First Days of School

Parents and guardians met with teachers at back-to-school night on September 16 to learn what their children will be doing this year. The evening also marked the kick-off of the Gecko Fund, a program where families contribute tax-deductible donations to the school. This cuts down on the numerous fundraisers and requests for money throughout the year.

A Sound Mind in a Sound Body

October 6th was International Walk to School Day, and a gaggle of Geckos got their exercise that morning – walking, biking, and rolling to school. Numerous studies show that children who exercise do better in school and on tests. In fact, the New York Times recently reported that a University of Illinois study compared the cognitive impact in young people of 20 minutes of running on a treadmill with 20 minutes of playing sports-style video games at a similar intensity. Running improved test scores immediately afterward. Playing video games did not. The Geckos will attempt to get their brain juices flowing by walking to school every Wednesday. Thanks to Clif Bar for helping the school with the kick-off event.

Walking wasn't the only thing on the Geckos' minds that week. Family Fun Night featured board games and quizzes. Prizes, snacks, and laughs were shared at the always-fun fall event.

Another way students can fuel their bodies is by taking advantage of our partnerships with area restaurants. The last Friday of the month is Schlotzsky's night, the last Tuesday of the month is Gatti's night, and many others that we'll feature in coming issues.

A Worldly Event

The Gullett Carnival will be Saturday, November 6 from 12 to 4 p.m. Many of the booths and activities, food and music will have international themes. Get your

fortunes read, each sushi, and listen to music from other lands. Let the carnival take you to Europe, the Middle East, the Far East ... and beyond!

To keep updated on the latest Gullett information, visit the school's website: www.gullettgeckos.com. In addition to the principal's blog, many of the teachers keep parents updated online with their individual blogs on the site.

Upcoming Events:

October 25: No School, conferences

October 28 (7:50 a.m.): Kindercapers

November 6 (noon): Gullett Carnival

November 8: Student holiday

November 24-26: Thanksgiving break ❖



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